

MACKIN, MIKE INTERVIEW.

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Field Worker: Thad Smith, Jr.  
June 14, 1937.

Interview with Mike Mackin,  
116 North 6th St.,  
Chickasha, Okla.

Born August 20, 1870, Tenn.

Parents Mike Mackin, father, Ireland.  
Lucy Lipe, mother, Tennessee.

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I came to Caddo, Indian Territory, on the M.K.&T. Railroad in 1882. I rode a stage from there to Pauls Valley, where I got a job from Sam Garvin, as handy man on his ranch. After I had worked for him about a year, at this job at a low salary, he raised my wages to fifty dollars a month, and put me to doing regular cowboy work.

I went with the other cowboys on the spring roundup, gathering cattle that had strayed from his ranch. Some of the cattle would drift as far as Red River, one hundred miles south. We would not find many head that far away from the home range unless we had a hard winter. The country was not fenced when I first came to the Chickasaw and Choctaw Nation, and

as range cattle were not fed in the winter, the storms would drift them south.

After we got our cattle gathered, we drove them toward the home range and attended other roundups on the way home. If we had a good many cattle gathered before we got home, we would brand and mark the calves; if not we would wait until we got home.

Our branding was all done on the prairie, in the open. Usually the herd was held together by four or five cowboys, while about three men on horses rode in the herd and roped the calves around the neck, and dragged them to a big log branding fire where there were men to throw and hold them while others branded and marked them.

We always ate our meals at a chuck wagon, either our own, or if we were working as stray men on someone else's range, we ate at their chuck wagon.

The most of the range cooks were cranky and hard to get along with, and the cowboys never stayed around the cook, or at least in his way, but when the cook

would yell, "Come and get it," there would be a wild scramble for the box where the tin plates, cups, knives and forks were kept. Everyone got his own plate and went to the pot and waited on himself.

Such food as beef, beans, potatoes, and sometimes dried fruit was cooked in iron pots. Most of the cooks made sour dough biscuits, baked in dutch ovens. Sour dough is made by mixing flour and water, salt, sugar, and soda together in a heavy batter. This is kept three or four days or until it sours, then part of the sour batter is mixed with flour, water, salt, soda, and lard, and made in to biscuits. When they are baked right in a dutch oven, they are very palatable. A little flour and water is added to the sour, heavy batter, everytime it is used, but you never have to add any more salt, sugar, or soda to it.

Sam Garvin had a big farm and raised seventy-five bushels of corn to the acre. He fed the most of it to beef steers, to be shipped to the Eastern markets. Snap-ped corn was chopped with a hatchet into three or four pieces, just small enough so that a steer could chew it.

After the steers were fat, they were driven to Caddo and shipped on the M.K.&T. Railroad to market. As many as two hogs to each steer were kept in the feed pen, to clean up the waste. They would get very fat, and were shipped to market the same time as the steers. The steers sold for about five or six cents a pound and the hogs brought about three cents a pound. Stock cows were worth about eighteen dollars a head.

I have eaten at a good many Indian camps, and was always treated very hospitably, and was offered the best of everything they had.

In 1889 when Old Oklahoma was opened, I was working for Bill McClure, a ranchman, in the Kickapoo Country. He had lots of cattle; his brand was 7 C (seven C). Mr. McClure rented about seventy-five head of horses to homesteaders to make the run. He got from seventy-five to fifty dollars for each one. After the homesteader made the run, he turned the horse loose and he would come home.

I was only nineteen years old at the time of the opening, but I made the run, thinking I could sell out

to some one. I got a claim staked, and after staying with it a day or two, became discouraged and gave it to a girl who wanted it for a home.

Mr. McClure got his supplies freighted from Caldwell, Kansas. Most of the freighting was done with oxen, usually twenty head would be hitched to four trail wagons.